

VOL. I]

SHANGHAI, JUNE 1897.

[No. 12

# THE RATTLE



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THE  
RATTLE

Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw—*Pope.*

Vol. I]

SHANGHAI, JUNE 1897

[No. 12

EN PASSANT.

[*N.B.*—We must be *very* careful.]

Farewell! our little day is done,  
Our little bills are paid,  
Our little course is fairly run,  
Our little pile is made.

Our little candle flickers out,  
('T was never much to see),  
Our little cruse is just about  
As dry as dry can be.

Our little jokes, that pleased of yore,  
Have lost the needful "snap,"  
Our little bodies hanker for  
A semipiternal nap.

And so, farewell! we disappear  
Without regret or sigh,  
We lived ('t was all our wish) a year,  
And now are glad to die.

The above, like all poetry, is only partially true; for, strictly speaking, the "RATTLE" has no intention of bidding farewell to its generous and appreciative readers. We "say, not good-bye, but au revoir," on the completion of this, our twelfth number. When, in May last, we bound ourselves, with bonds of hard sycee, to produce the "RATTLE" for a year, the public came forward nobly to assist in an undertaking of such splendid audacity, and doubtless rejoices, with the Editors, over the completed task. But with the lapse of time has come experience; and having fulfilled this solemn contract, it is now evident to us that the continual expectation of our stimulating publication at short and regular intervals is too great a strain upon the nervous system of the public. This is borne out by the many cases of depression and acute melancholia which have come under our notice on the occasions when the "RATTLE's" appearance has been inevitably delayed. For the future, therefore, we

make no definite promises; we bind neither ourselves nor the public. Henceforth the "RATTLE" will appear, not as a regularly rising planet, but as an unexpected meteor, flashing from the gloomy void. We might have said, as a comet, were it not for the fact that comets are held by the ignorant to be the precursors of strife, and our mission [*pace* Chefoo] is eminently peaceful.

The "RATTLE's" feelings, at the close of its first volume, are pleased and proud beyond measure, and the reader will find them accurately depicted in the lifelike sketch which appears on page 181. Like everyone whose object it is to labour for the public weal, we have had our little troubles; we have occasionally been misunderstood; but, taking one consideration with another, the "RATTLE" congratulates itself upon having established a very genuine *entente cordiale* with a most appreciative public. This relationship it will do its best to cultivate still further in the future; in the meantime, the attention of subscribers is called to the notice on page 188. And now, enough of ourselves.

The concert of Europe has been playing all its best tunes, under the direction of the children of Israel, and the great European war is averted, after an ignominious exhibition of the modern Greek's fighting capacities. Making all due allowances for journalistic accuracy, there is not much of the Spartan left in the Greek, and, however unpleasant we may consider the Turk as regards his manners and morals, he shows up uncommonly well when the drums begin to beat. We observe from recent telegrams that in the fighting on the Thessalian frontier Reuter's agent was in great danger, but that he eventually escaped. This is the saddest news, so far, from the seat of war.

The subject of wheelbarrows and their coolies has long ago produced in most of us "that tired feeling." Nevertheless it is one of which we are not likely to have heard the last word. The Chinese appear to

infer from recent events that "*omnia funkta in uno*" is in future to be the motto of this community, and their little games may very possibly be based upon such inference. The movement at present on foot for gilding the Barrow pill requires watching, and a tight eye should be kept on the Taotai. Your Chinese coolie is a peace-loving person; left to himself, he blusters a little, just for the sake of "face" and because it is Chinese custom, but he goes no further than bluster unless unexpectedly successful, or unless the affair is carefully organised in high quarters. *Verba sap.*

\* \* \* \* \*

The Review of German-drilled native troops at Woosung the other day was a most successful affair, up to a certain stage, *i.e.* the stage where steam launches should have been found for the return trip, and were not. To see two thousand sons of Han lifting their four thousand feet to the high parade step wherein the Kaiser delights, was to believe in the awakening of China, and to know, a few days later, that it had been vouchsafed them to prove their utility by suppressing their mutinous fellow-countrymen, was a source of real satisfaction. If Chinese soldiers are to fight anyone—which is doubtful—they cannot begin better than with their kith and kin. Brigadier Shun Tun-ho (Shun Fai-ting would be a better name for a Chinese officer) may well be proud of his warriors; as to the mutiny, it seems to have been nothing more than a flash in the P'an contingent, caused by the usual financial tactics of native commanders, and the moral thereof is that if the brave deserves the homeward fare, he ought to get it.

\* \* \* \* \*

The iron hand of the great White Tzar is visibly tightening on North China, and the advisers of the Son of Heaven are gradually realising the fact. The goose has invited the bear to dine, and need not therefore be surprised if portions of her own anatomy are required to supplement the menu; of which state of affairs the recent Sending of Princes is a clear intimation.

The reception accorded by the Chinese Government to the Russian Envoys marks an epoch in the foreign relations of the Middle Kingdom, and is gratifying in itself as an evidence of a new sense of international courtesy. The oyster is opening slowly, under a strong hand; and the mollusc is about to be served up *à la Russe*; if the proceedings, from a British point of view, are not entirely satisfactory, it is as well to remember that the gentlemen who have slumbered so sweetly and so long in Downing Street have only themselves to thank for the present situation. They have had plenty of notice.

\* \* \* \* \*

The outward and visible object of Prince Ouk-tomsky's visit to Peking is, we understand, to present H.M. Kuanghsü with some drawing-room ornaments and the Empress Dowager with a necklace. The Prince is also going to make enquiries about the coal required for the Siberian railway—[which will probably prove to be a Protocol]—and considerable activity may

be expected in the Finance and Loan Departments of Li Hung-chang's immediate *entourage*. If the Peking festivities include any illuminations, we should much like to see some light cast on the recent negotiations of Li, Shêng & Co.

\* \* \* \* \*

Talking of Li, what a characteristic piece of work is that recent letter over his signature in which the old satrap recommends the Rev. Mr. GILBERT REID to his numerous friends in the United States. How glibly the catchwords run, and what unexpected insight into the position of China's educated classes does the vice-regal humility reveal. "Blind leaders of the blind" waiting eagerly for light from the West to "lead the people out of darkness"! Not a sign here, at all events, of the "suspicion, prejudice and self-sufficiency" which the venerable patriot so pathetically deplores as the "peculiar traits of the educated Chinese." Reading these unctuous lines, we feel that the millennium has come; the Li family is about to distribute its honest savings for the welfare of the "people in darkness," and corruption in high places shall be no more.

Nevertheless, on calmer reflection, two questions force themselves upon the mind of Didymus—*viz.*: How does the Chinese original of the Ex-Viceroy's letter [if there is one] appeal to his less enlightened official brethren? and, How much does Li himself subscribe to the International Institute?

Putting Li aside, however, [as a hopeless case] we wish Mr. GILBERT REID godspeed and good success. He is a brave man, a hard fighter and a good worker; and his scheme appeals not only as philanthropy, but, in certain directions, as a business investment. There are many who will subscribe to his Institute not so much in the hope of reforming the Chinese official, as with the idea of casting their bread upon remunerative waters.

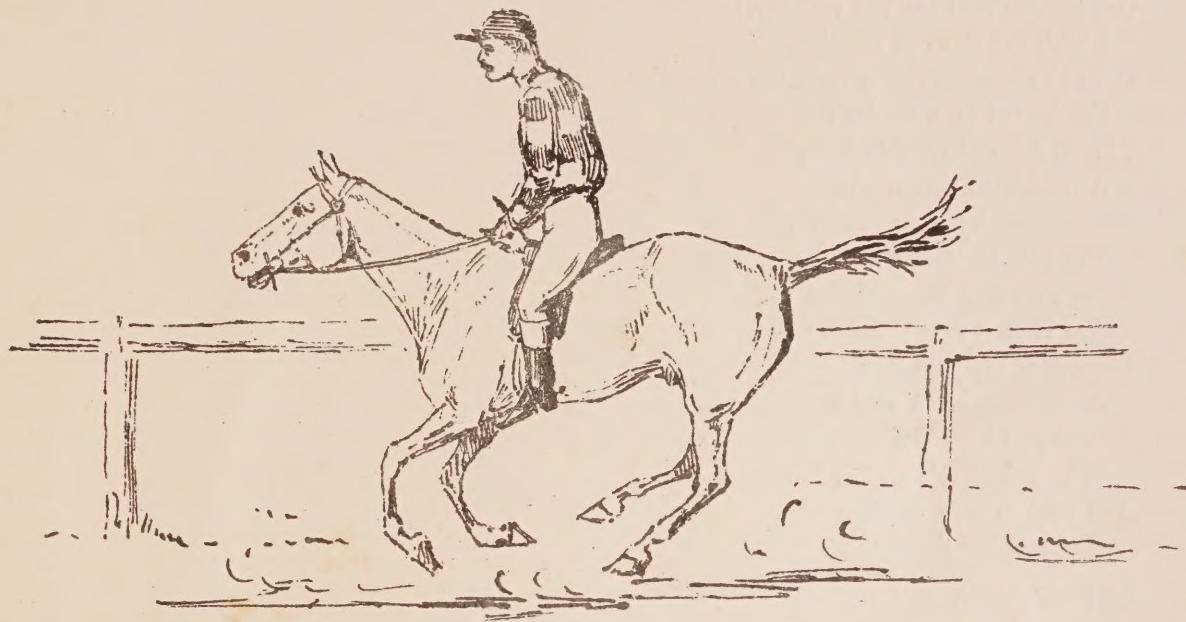
\* \* \* \* \*

A good story reaches us from Peking as to the reception accorded by the elderly statesmen of the Yamén to a certain realistic work of art which was sent, amongst other things, to H.M. Kuanghsü by *la grande nation*. To expect that a study of the nude on European lines should appeal to a Chinese Emperor and lead him into closer relations with *la belle France*, argues a mistaken idea at the Quai d'Orsay as to the extent of China's development; and the fate of the picture itself will scarcely be appreciated by a nation of artists. It is a case of pearls before pigtail.

\* \* \* \* \*

To know that on Jubilee Day four of the most beautiful members of Shanghai's Light Horse will ride, in all their pride, through the streets of London town should be a source of additional joy to every one of us in the midst of our own little celebrations; but to realise that we shall not behold them, in all their "pomp and circumstance," adds another drop of bitterness to the cup of exile. It may, however, cheer our readers to learn that we are making arrangements for a special photograph, and hope to present it with our next coloured number.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

*H.H.*

## TURF CELEBRITIES.—No. 7.

Mr. D. W. CRAWFORD.

THE sporting community in Shanghai can produce no more energetic or popular individual than the subject of our illustration, Mr. D. W. CRAWFORD. He is a conspicuously useful member of both the Race Club and the Paper Hunt Club; of the latter, both as a cross-country rider and as a steward, he is a mainstay and *pièce de résistance*.

Mr. CRAWFORD's rise to his present prominent position as a jockey in Shanghai is of comparatively recent date, his first win being the Jockey Cup on "Venture" in the spring of 1890; and it was not till two years later that he blossomed forth, with "Boldheart" and "Au Revoir," well up in the list of winning jocks. Since then he has done himself well, and his recent performance in Hongkong, which gave him a "record" for the largest number of wins at any one meeting, is still fresh in everyone's memory.

Almost invariably the first man at the Course in the morning, he puts in a lot of work before business hours, and on race days owners have in him a rider who is as "fit" as can be. On the steeplechase course and across country he is "all there," and many a man who has flattered himself that he had a Hunt in hand has been woefully undeceived by Mr. CRAWFORD on "Venture" in the last hundred yards.

Mr. CRAWFORD is a good cricketer, and can ride a pad-horse against any circus-lady on earth. Has an undeserved reputation for shyness in the presence of the fair sex, and always goes to sleep immediately after dinner.

## A MODEST REQUEST.

[*Vide a recent letter from Dr. W. A. P. Martin in the "Peking and Tientsin Times."*]

Ask me no more, I entreat !  
All I can give you I give—  
Cards you may leave at my door,  
Hats you may raise in the street.  
Victuals, that help you to live,  
Drinks, that inspire you to soar,  
These are but snares to my feet.  
Ask me no more !

Something besides I may give—  
Tiffin at one, and (at four)  
Tea, if you press me, I'll eat—  
Not that they help me to live.  
Only this prayer I repeat,  
" Spare me my nights, if no more!"—  
Nights that are precious and sweet,  
Fruitful of work that will live :  
Prose, with its length and its lore,  
Verse, with its rhythmical feet—  
That's what my evenings will give.

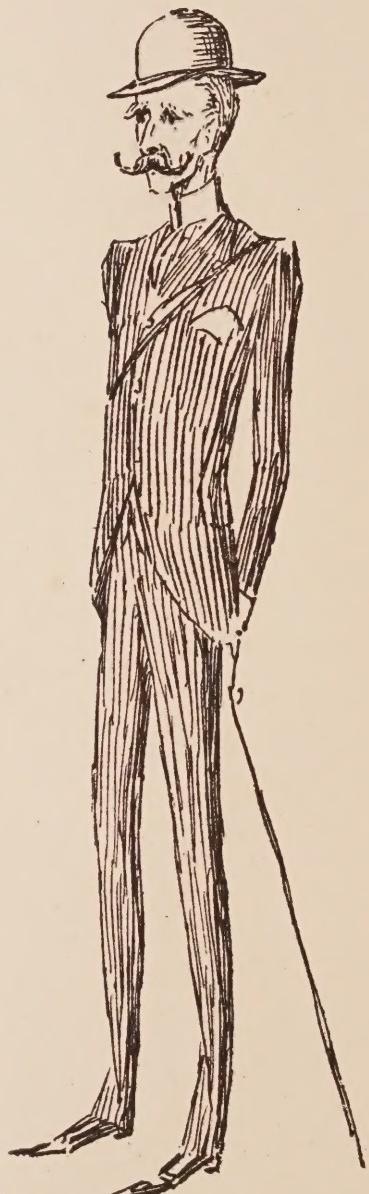
## BLIND PYGMALION.

Och wirrasthru! (as Pat will say,)  
 I wish my life was merrier.  
 Here I'm condemned to walk the streets  
 Conducted by a terrier :  
 I make from charitable doles  
 A livelihood precarious,  
 Forestalling by some centuries  
 The gallant Belisarius.  
 Since Pity and Benevolence  
 Are virtues that ennable us,  
 Deposit in my pannikin  
 A drachma or an obolus.  
 So will you benefit a wretch  
 Whose destiny's a scaly 'un  
 And help to keep in cigarettes  
 Unfortunate Pygmalion.

Oh ! life's one huge tremendous sell,  
 A tangled web of fallacies :  
 I thought myself a genius born  
 To pass my time in palaces.  
 My wife had lived as lady's-maid  
 With one of our best goddesses,  
 I sculptured lovely damosels,  
 Both in and out of bodices.  
 I never flirted in my life :  
 Nay, when I come to think of it,  
 I don't believe I ever even  
 Hovered on the brink of it ;  
 Yet now I'm being punished  
 As I never, never thought to be,  
 For winking at a Gal who's not  
 As stony as she ought to be.

G. M. H. P.

We rejoice greatly with the good Mayor of Mentone over the fountain recently presented to that town by Mr. THOMAS HANBURY. With the eye of faith we can see that picturesque spot with all its happy burghers in holiday attire praising the munificence of the kind *milord*, and drinking freely, though not necessarily from the fount. We take a personal pride in Mentone's satisfaction, but with this feeling, we must admit there lurks an *arrière-pensée* which cannot be stifled—viz.: mightn't Shanghai have got a Jubilee pump ?



FORM AT A GLANCE.

H.B.M.'S MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY AND  
 ENVOY EXTRAORDINARY.

## SOME SKETCHES

AT THE

SHANGHAI

SPRING MEETING,

1897.



Mr. E. H. Gore-Booth  
in his original character.



The Judge.



The usual finish of the  
Champions.



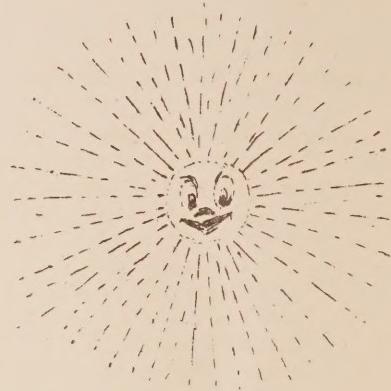
One of the Stewards.



The Russian Stable.

## CELIA.

When lovely Celia walks abroad  
 Spring winds blow soft and light,  
 Each bird trills forth his sweetest lay  
 To greet so fair a sight,  
 The sun, dispersing every cloud,  
 All ardent, from above,  
 Sends forth his brightest rays to kiss  
 The dimpled cheek I love.



Then Celia, coy as she is fair,  
 Beneath that searching gaze,  
 With gentle art avoids the warmth  
 Of great Apollo's rays ;  
 With little deprecating sighs,  
 And most bewitching grace,  
 She holds a dainty parasol  
 To shade her pretty face.

Alas, for me, in sorrier plight,  
 Who gaze on Celia's eyes,  
 No art can shield me from the light  
 That in their beauty lies.  
 Nay, even should I gaze no more,  
 And from their brilliance fly,  
 Nought else I know, where'er I go,  
 But their sweet memory.

## DIPLOMACY EN FÊTE.

[A Race-meeting in the City of Dreadful Dirt.]

RACE meetings in Peking are a distinctly local variety. Shanghai has her great races and many of the outports have their little ones, all more or less on the same lines; but the Pekinese meeting is of an original and very curious type. It combines all the features of a picnic and a gymkhana. There is but little of the business element about it and a good deal of sport for sport's sake, with strange cattle, and weird riding; also with much good fellowship and polyglot conviviality. But in the background of it all, looms ever the mighty presence of Diplomacy—diplomacy at play, it is true, unbending and forgetting for a while the weight of Europe's load of care, but bringing with it, nevertheless, into paddock and weighing-room something of its wonted shibboleth and solemn étiquette, wearing amidst the spurs and silks the undoffable garments of its cast-iron conventionalities.

Race-days are an occasion for which there is no generally recognised diplomatic attitude: the situation is therefore an extraordinary one, and each dignitary is obliged to follow his own line. The result, as a study of human nature, is extremely interesting; for when all is said and done your diplomat, beneath the heavy cloak of his dignified position, has often a very human *ego*. He cannot always be a polished entity, guarding a mobile mouth after the models of the Vienna Congress, and filling in his leisure moments with posing and polite platitudes. Under the stimulus of bright sunshine, the unusual dissipation of a day in the open air, the mild excitement of the races, and last, but not least, the kindly influence of a champagne tiffin, the human Jekyll not unfrequently peeps from behind the diplomatic Hyde. To me, *moi qui vous parle*, it has often been vouchsafed in bygone days to see the great guns of our Peking community, personages whose usual pose was of the impassive shaping-the-fate-of-nations type, forget for a day the training of a lifetime. I have joyfully observed them departing from all the gilt-laced traditions of "*la carrière*" in the fierce joy of leading in a winner, sorry beast though he usually was. I have seen *Chargés d'Affaires*—not *des affaires*, mind you—ay, and even Ministers, descend on the wild impulse of a moment, to acts of jovial familiarity, the recollection of which must have produced acute remorse on their return to the cold decorum of the Legations. I have seen First Secretaries patted on their sacred backs by gladsome students; portly dignitaries drinking, without prejudice, to the success of a Customs griffin; and once (ah, what a day that was!) when the British Legation crack "*Osman*" was beaten in the Champions by the Russians' "*Rasboynik*" it was my good fortune to behold the hat of a French maker of Treaties smashed on his head by an enthusiastic and light-

hearted subject of the Tzar. Had the smasher been a German, the incident might well have disturbed the peace of Europe; but as matters stood, it was accepted as a spontaneous demonstration of the *entente cordiale*.

For diplomacy, even *en fête*, cannot leave politics behind; "*la carrière*" being the only profession in which "shop" is never bad form. The last phase of the European concert finds a faint echo even in the attitude of the smallest "personage" lost in the wilds of far Cathay, and the Franco-Russian alliance shows itself, *faute de mieux*, in a poor opinion of the Italian stable or by a joint bid for the U.S. Cup. On this quaint race-course, the stately handshakings after each event, between the representatives of, say, Russia and Germany, partake of the solemn nature of international courtesies—ceremonies which, however unpalatable, are not to be shirked by diplomats who know what issues may hang upon their least sin of omission. And so the Italian pony's health is drunk by all the Powers, friendly or unfriendly; Russia pats England on the back after the Griffins as if the Treaty of Berlin were already cast to the winds; while Belgium, Spain, and all the other European nations that come hither to protect their flags and half-a-dozen missionaries, assist at the function and do their best to take an intelligent interest in sport conducted under Newmarket rules.

For many of these poor exiles, the races are a very godsend; bright, eventful days in the dull round of eternal pasteboard-shooting and dreary dinners; and should they chance to be officially connected with the Lotteries or the Course, it is safe to say that the meeting provides them with more occupation than all the rest of the year put together. The enthusiasm which the China pony evokes here and there in the City of Dreadful Dirt is, therefore, perfectly intelligible and proper. I knew, long ago, a certain *Charge d'Affaires* whose national flag had not been seen in the China seas for three years and who hadn't heard more than twice from his government during that time—he himself had certainly not written oftener—that man's interests in life (apart from a certain natural anxiety about his salary) were centered in the China pony and whist; our spring and autumn meetings being the only oases in a desert of monotony.

Peking racing is conducted on principles which differ considerably from those which obtain elsewhere; to do it anything like justice would require the full Staff of the *Pink 'un*. Although the ponies themselves have never yet been trained to observe the rules of diplomatic precedence, the proceedings on the whole reflect a good deal of the local and peculiar conditions of society. The Stewards are chosen, not for any individual knowledge or interest in racing, but on the more important principle that each of the great nations shall have a proper say in the matter, and the balance of power is a thing to be nicely considered. There is, I believe, an unwritten law that no claim for a foul shall ever be lodged against a pony belonging to an Envoy or Minister Plenipotentiary under any circumstances (it is certain that nobody

would ever think of doing such a thing), a fact which might affect the betting, if there were any. [Happily there isn't.] In the case of a dead-heat, the average Judge on the Peking course, being diplomatic, usually decides the matter in the light of existing international relations, and the falseness of a start depends chiefly on the ownership of the pony that gets off first. Such little peculiarities as these lend a new and delicate flavour to sport, and, being possible on no other spot upon earth, the new-comer finds them at first extremely interesting and curious. But their charm is apt to pall upon a longer and closer acquaintance.

It is true that the Anglo-Saxon element, even on these occasions, puts sport first and diplomatic usage second, without which racing were impossible; but *les chers collègues* are too numerous, and their astonishment too evident, for the fun ever to become very furious. Japanese, Teutons, and stolid Yamēnfed Chinese; Iberians and Gauls gaze down in mild wonder from the Grand Stand on proceedings which disturb their sense of decorum; they join in them as they would at an official dinner, preserving all the dignity of étiquette. There are, of course, exceptions, and many of the said *chers collègues* (especially Russians) are good and notable sportsmen; but the bulk of the crowd in the paddock, although enjoying its festive outing, does not pretend to any intelligent interest in racing for its own sake. It weighs in handsomely, however, at tiffin, and drinks with acclamation to all manner of eloquent toasts.

Gambling on the Peking course has never been indulged in to excess. There are Lotteries, it is true, and at seasons of reckless extravagance the tickets will cost as much as a dollar—I remember when they were ten cents—but this form of dissipation has never met with much encouragement. On one occasion, an energetic individual started a Pari-Mutuel, with dollar chances; but it was not a success. The average diplomatic representative of continental Europe in the Far East looks with considerable suspicion upon these methods of risking his money: he will play *baccarat* with you, or *petits chevaux*, but where ponies are concerned he holds ignorance to be bliss and the purchase of wisdom, folly. He is probably right. Then again, many Third Secretaries and Students would gamble willingly enough, were it not for the fact that their Governments fail to provide the wherewithal for such pastimes, while their seniors would not object to putting a few dollars on their stable if they were certain the thing might be done without loss of dignity; so, between one reason and another, Race Lotteries in Peking are not exciting. But although their totals are not large enough to excite anyone's cupidity, the manner in which they are conducted (in that zone of neutral territory which is known as the Peking Club) is sufficient to provide food for mirth to any man whose bump of humour is even slightly developed. Fortunately for the diplomat, the very nature of his profession forbids his indulging in such a bump, in fact, it

would certainly ruin him for life. So most of the audience which "assists" at these weird Lotteries probably sees nothing curious about them.

But the Peking Club is another story; it deserves a chapter to itself.

## A QUEST FOR FAERYLAND.

O faeryland, dark faeryland,  
Where are thy groves and meadows?  
(Beneath my darling's fillet-band  
Lie all their golden shadows!)

O faeryland, smooth faeryland,  
Where are thy grottoes hidden?  
(In magic marble of her hand  
And chin they gape unbidden!)

O faeryland, warm faeryland,  
Where do thy sunbeams brighten?  
(Oft as her lips in smiles expand,  
Their rays my journey lighten!)

O faeryland, gay faeryland,  
Where are thy rings for dancing?  
(Between her eyelids is a strand  
Where sprites are ever prancing!)

O faeryland, far faeryland,  
What path leads to thy portal,  
And must it to my feet be bann'd  
Because I am a mortal?

O faeryland, near faeryland,  
My heart hath trespassed on thee;  
Beware! 'T will steal thine elfin wand  
And tell me that I've won thee!

## ACOLYTE.

*A Political Question:*—When you find an Abyss in yer, why not take a Negus?

*Old Maid:*—"Boy, which is the quickest way for me to get to the railway station?"

*Accommodating Boy:*—"Run."—*Dublin World.*



VIRTUE IS ITS OWN REWARD.

## THE BRIDGE: A FRAGMENT.

[*Not from the "Lays of Ancient Rome."*]

Two Sikhs stood calm and silent,  
And gazed upon their foes,  
While most unpleasant language  
From all the vanguard rose,  
Then forth a dozen coolies  
From out that rabble sprang,  
Armed with bamboos and other sticks  
And plentiful supply of bricks,  
They crossed the Yang-King-Pang.

Coolies from Kin-Lee-Yuen,  
Of most unpleasant mien,  
Rowdies whose midnight washes  
Were few and far between,  
Behind them were their fellows,  
Sinza's most foul array,  
And with them an unholy crew  
Who, from the depths of Li Hongkew  
And many another low purlieue,  
Had come to join the fray.

Now faster still and faster  
The handy brickbats rain,  
And in the face of such great odds  
The bobbies strive in vain,  
Right manfully they bear them  
And wield the lethal blade,  
But still their yelling foes advance  
Unhindered from the Quai de France,  
And bamboos, by the hundred, dance  
Like boughs in forest glade.

Full sad had been the ending,  
I trow, of those brave Sikhs  
Beneath the storm of brickbats  
And heavy-falling sticks  
Had not the Gods, that ever  
Rejoice at valiant deed,  
Looked down and sent them succour  
In that grim hour of need.

Upon the Club verandah  
There stood a little knot  
Of those whose daily pidgin  
Impels them to that spot,  
We, who have known them, hold them  
For men of valiant race:  
Do we not know their chariots fleet  
That daily, through each narrow street,  
Rush at a frightful pace?

Now when these heard the tumult  
And saw that fierce affray  
Each man snatched up a stick in haste  
And sallied forth straightway,  
Across the Bund they speeded  
Towards the howling press,  
And came to that contested ground  
Where bricks and offal, strewn around,  
Had made a horrid mess.

First in the van was Graham,  
Majestic in his wrath,  
Graham, the man of fluent speech  
That readily breaks forth;  
Swift striding to the leaders,  
So that all men should hear,  
He gave them what Chinese he knew—  
Strong were his words, although but few—  
And, for a space, that howling crew  
Was hushed in wondering fear.

But in his wake came Lamond,  
Emerging from McBain's,  
Lamond, who broketh all day long  
And fatteneth on gains;  
No thought was his of parley,  
But, rushing on the foe,  
He strove to join the brave police,  
Till, stumbling on a lump of grease,  
It straightway laid him low.

Then fierce round Lamond fallen  
And fiercer grew the fight,  
There, hard on Graham's costard  
A long bamboo did smite;  
And Cushny, Hsiangli's taipan,  
Who from his office saw  
Both Lamond's plight and Graham's head,  
Swift to their rescue hastened,  
Until a brickbat, deftly sped,  
Lit full upon his jaw.

But wherefore tell the exploits  
Which on that day were done,  
Why sing of Keswick, or of Gove  
[Whom men call Gosse, for fun]?  
Their fame is ever growing—  
Now at the bar they tell  
Great feats of derring-do, and blows,  
Strange tales of Robertsonian throws,  
And many other deeds of those  
Who kept the bridge so well.



APRIL 1897.

*Fond Wife*.—Now James! I don't care a bit whether it's against the Regulations or not—You don't mount guard over the Yang-king-pang Bridge all night without something warm round your neck. Remember now, the sandwiches are in your helmet and the flask in your pouch,—and for goodness sake don't go and run any foolish risks.

H.H.

## OPEN LETTER.

## VII.—To the Editors of the "Rattle."

GENTLEMEN,

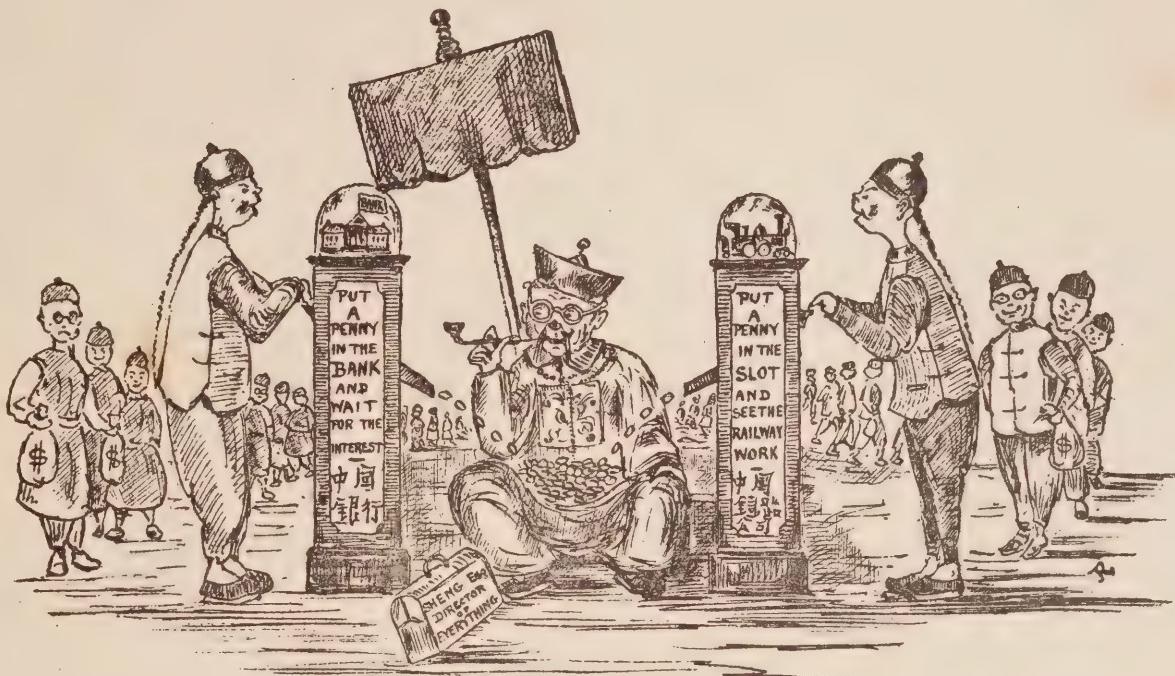
I have heard with feelings akin to regret the announcement that you propose to discontinue the monthly issue of your paper. This intelligence did not surprise me, for the tardy and irregular appearance of recent numbers had to some extent prepared my mind for a crisis in your affairs. As to the reasons which have induced your present step, various rumours are in circulation. On the one hand, it is freely stated that the venture has not paid its way, and that the syndicate of German financiers upon whose pecuniary assistance it relied has now withdrawn all support, in consequence of your unsatisfactory treatment of recent events in Peking. On the other hand, it is alleged upon equally good authority and with the like show of probability, that long-standing friction between the members of your staff has culminated in scenes of personal violence. But I have no doubt myself that the true explanation lies in the fact that you are tired of the whole business, and if that be so I can only say "More's the pity"! You have played to very indulgent and appreciative critics, and one cannot but wonder that your endurance should not have equalled that of your audience.

Well, gentlemen, I suppose that you are the best judges in matters affecting your own interests, and we must content ourselves with the quarterly or half-yearly dole which is all that we are to look for in the future. Now for a few words on your past work. For my part I am sorry that you have not been able to do a little more for your subscribers in Hongkong and at the outports—other than Chefoo. You began with large promises and performances not wholly inadequate. But in your later numbers you have allowed yourselves to become entirely local, with results which you would perhaps more fully realize were you to invite subscriptions for another year's issue. From the scope of these remarks I have already excepted Chefoo. The attention with which you have honoured that little settlement seems to have touched the hearts of many members of the community.

And yet, after all, most of your subscribers live neither in Hongkong nor in the outports, but here in Shanghai, and it is by what you have done for Shanghai that your reputations must stand or fall. Now, if I were not afraid of setting you by the ears, I should venture to affirm that there is one portion only of your work which is at all likely to resist the ravages of time: I mean your illustrations. I notice that one of your contemporaries has been confessedly cherishing a hope that your principal artist would prove himself a Phil May. Such an illusion was, of course, foredoomed to death, but in my humble opinion it is a little absurd to blame H. H. for a disappointment which was in the nature of things inevitable. Phil Mays are not precisely as common as blackberries, and no one need be ashamed of not standing in the very first rank of modern masters of "black and white." On the

other hand, anyone might be proud of having delineated with such accuracy and so much sympathetic feeling the various sides of Shanghai life. But although I rest your claim to the notice of posterity upon your portraits and other illustrations, I do not wish to be understood as asserting that the letterpress of your paper is entirely devoid of merit. I suppose that you hardly expect me to approve it *en bloc*: if such were your expectation, conscientious scruples would compel me to disappoint you. I should have to say, for example, that neither your Latin verse, nor your Dishes of the Day, nor your recurrent ebullitions of patriotism were altogether to my taste, and I have no wish to indulge in personalities. But though I will not commit myself to a general approval, I can honestly say that a great deal of the literary matter which you have published has afforded me pleasure, and, having said so much, I may add that I count upon your accepting any criticism in a friendly spirit like to that by which it is dictated. Speaking then of your work generally, I think that you have given us too many long articles: or, to put the same idea in different words, that your longest articles were not always your best. I know, at least I fancy, that your reply will be "Very likely what you say is true, but we are obliged to fill our columns somehow." But, gentlemen, that answer does not excuse your error: it only explains the causes of it. It tells us why you went wrong, but it does not make us admit that you were right. In the absence of a sufficient supply of copy of average quality there is only one course open to editors, namely, to reduce the size of their paper. And even granting that the adoption of such a policy would have been somewhat derogatory to your dignity, is there no loss of self-respect involved in the publication of such rubbish as—as—well, if you don't know what I refer to, your readers do.

Now another point. I suppose you are not aware of it, but it is nevertheless an indisputable fact that you are less comic in your later numbers than you were in the early ones and infinitely more serious. The ridiculous has a place of its own in journalism. I do not say that we expect flippancy in the *Morning Post* or light humour in the *Overland Mail*, but if we are not to look for jokes in a comic or serio-comic paper where are we look for them? Your defence is, I suppose, that one is not always in the mood for fooling, and if that is all that you have got to say for yourselves, I think that you had better say nothing. If you do not feel funny at times when it is your business to write nonsense that is your misfortune; but we demand the nonsense all the same. But, when I come to think of it, you may flatly deny my statement that you are not comic, and may suggest that I don't recognize a joke when I see one. Well, I know that I am not particularly bright, and for that very reason you may take it that I should not have put forward such a complaint unless I were sure of my ground. Still, the wisest of us makes blunders now and then, and I am not too proud to recant when I am convinced that I am in the wrong. Therefore I make you a fair offer. If you can show me a joke in "By the Waters of Babylon" or the "Open Letter to an M.P." I will



Put a penny in the slot,  
There's a little dear,  
If you get it back or not  
Isn't very clear.

China for the Chinese keep,  
Syndicates evade,  
We can shear our Chinese sheep  
Without Foreign aid.

unsay all I have said in disparagement of your humour. Mind, I don't pretend that there was not a drop of sentiment in the former production and a grain of sense in the latter: my point is "Where does the fun come in?"

But I haven't quite finished with you yet. People tell me that you complain of the small assistance which you have received in the way of literary contributions. Has it ever struck you that the very beautiful and lofty style which characterizes the work of your staff has been a principal cause of the reluctance of outsiders to send their work to your paper? I don't suppose it has. And yet, let me tell you, if you could have contrived to be a little more homely and natural you would have stood a far better chance of getting help from untried genius. In fact, gentlemen, you have been too "toney," and we have all been afraid—I, at any rate, have been afraid—to trust you with our little attempts in prose or rhyme.

Now, I hope that you will not think, my dear sirs, that I have been too hard on you. Some things, perhaps, I may have put a little too strongly, but I believe that, in the main, I have dealt with you as a kind and wise parent deals with the child of his affections; neither praising him over much, lest he be puffed up with pride, nor entreating him harshly, to the effusion of blood. That you may profit by this little labour of love is the sole desire of your well-wisher,

P.

#### TO OLD AGE: A SOLILOQUY.

[*Sung by Spoffins on learning that his wife has gone to a clearance sale.*]

Ye happy dreams that I have dreamt, farewell !  
Thou trellised cottage by the river's brim,  
Soft-sheltered in some chestnut-shaded dell,  
Thou and thy pleasant places have grown dim  
With this fell stroke. Farewell ! henceforth I bow  
Humbly my head beneath the hand of Fate,  
The modest acres and their gentle cow,  
The little paddock with its painted gate,  
The hedge where rabbits burrow, and the stream  
Where I, in fancy, lured bright-speckled trout,  
The fragrant orchard with its golden gleam  
Of ripening apples—all are blotted out !

Now mine henceforth a vision of old age  
Penurious, unprofitable, drear ;  
Sadly I scan the dark prophetic page  
Of my declining days, and yonder, clear  
Stands the white almhouse that awaiteth me.  
I see myself beside its ugly door,  
Smoking the pipe of niggard charity,  
I see my place amidst a dozen more  
Decrepit waifs that eat the parish fare  
And wash it down with pints of parish ale.  
Bright hopes, farewell ! nought's left but grim despair—  
Amelia's at a Ladies' Clearance Sale.

## AN UNPUBLISHED FRAGMENT, FROM THE ARABIAN NIGHTS.

Now when it was the One Thousand and Second Night Shahrazad said:—"It hath reached me, oh auspicious King, that the great Emperor Kuanghsu al Rash'd commanded all his governors, chamberlains and high officers to go unto the sea-gates and meet the Prince Al Rushin, and to lead him unto the city in state. These, therefore, obeyed their Lord's decree, and Abu Fattun bi Squeezah, the Governor, with Un Hung Chang, the Chief Scribe, went forth to meet the Prince at the sea-gates and bowed themselves before him; then, with an immense retinue riding on the right hand and on the left, they brought him in noble state to the Kung Kwan. The Prince was amazed at the splendour of this edifice, praising chiefly the costly hangings of Taichong and the innumerable candles; also he wondered at the beauty of the carpets of Fuhsieh. Thereafter, having washed his feet, they carried him into the inner court, where he was received by a multitude of courtly persons and yellow Jinn-slaves who seated him in the place of honour and stood to do him service. At this point he was carried away by his strong emotion, but the Jinn-slaves, after bringing him back with restoratives purchased at great price (from Ching Chong), poured rosewater with myrrh upon his beard. And the Prince marvelled greatly at such lavish display; but remembering how payment for the same would eventually be made, he winked the other eye. And he repaired straightway to an inner chamber where were burning scented woods, and was rejoiced beyond measure to find therein set out all things needful, even unto a toothbrush.

"Then came the Caliph Ad Im on Tost, summoning him to the Banquet Hall; into which, when he was come, were ushered the chief men of the province, wearing buttons and feathers beyond number, together with merchants of substance and the chiefs of the Ghiaours. Then Hadyah Bad Li Yusuf, a notable scribe, bade pages introduce the Prince to all that goodly company, and the Prince bowed and spake friendly unto them all, observing that it was a fine day [for the rain fell heavily]. Then spake Abu Fattun bi Squeezah and said: 'Behold now, the tables are spread, oh Commander of the Fearful! Let us feast and be merry, eating of that which Allah Almighty hath given.'

"Therefore they feasted, sitting every man according to his rank, with gladness and goodly gree, unto the going down of the sun, and the musicians beat loudly upon their tom-toms with great minstrelsy. And with the sound of their music and with breaking the seals of many wine-flasks (of Yuentah) the heart of the Prince waxed passing glad, so that he said: 'It is a good people and a land of exceeding plenty,' and again he winked with the other eye. Then, when they had washed their faces with tepid dish-cloths and finished all their feasting, while yet they sat in the banqueting-

hall came posturers and men of the play-booths to gladden their souls with mimicry; and the musicians played the more loudly as if Shaitan were in them. So that when the Prince and all that goodly company had made an end of feasting no man could put his hat upon his head, so greatly had it swelled. And some slept in their seats, while others drank costly sherbets, wherein is cooling, and whispered one to the other of railways, loans and other mares'-nests. But the other eye of the Prince was too weary for further winking."

*And Shahrazad looked and saw the dawn breaking in the east and made an end of her permitted say.*

## AN EXTRACT.

WE have received from an unknown source a lengthy parody of Mr. SWINBURNE'S "Garden of Proserpine." The writer deals not ineffectively with the Thirty Minutes' War and its results, but we regret that the space at our disposal does not permit of our publishing in full a poem of twelve stanzas and nearly one hundred lines. From the samples given below our readers will perhaps be able to judge of the whole consignment.

\* \* \* \*

We are tired of rant and railing  
And men that never cease  
To blame the slightest failing  
Of Councillors and P'lice;  
Of acid speech and fruity,  
"Leaders" of subtle beauty,  
Home guards, and sentry duty,  
And everything but peace.

\* \* \* \*

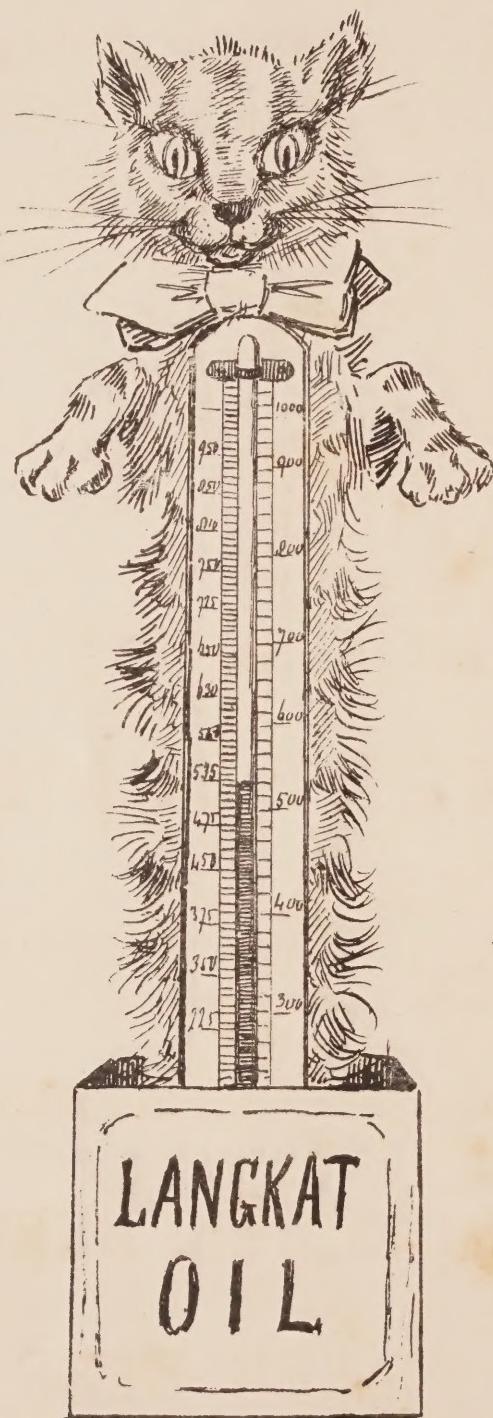
Here life had sleep for pleasure,  
And, whatsoe'er befel  
To vex an hour of leisure,  
Weak spirits served to quell;  
We rode or wheeled and whither  
You wot, for all make thither,  
And few whom fate blows hither,  
But know the Bubbling Well.

\* \* \* \*

Red as the boiled crustacea  
On many a bridge and street  
They "lift" the scum of Asia  
With lank and tireless feet.  
Shanghai has sons to guard her,  
Whose serried tacks are harder,  
Than aught which civic ardour  
Dare vote when voters meet.



THE THREATENING ATTITUDE OF THE WHEEL-BARROW COOLIE.—APRIL 1897.



### EVANGELICAL.

[Mr. M. J. D. Stephens of Hongkong is at present in Shanghai  
on behalf of the liquidator.  
*Evening Paper.*]

Matthew John, mark and look  
What names are writ in the sacred book !  
(Sc. Imuris).

Matthew John, look and mark  
Lest evil come when the day breaks dark !

Look and mark, then get you gone !  
Feathers are plentiful, Matthew John !

Mark and look, but the tar to bath you  
Is always, I hear, upon tap, John Matthew !

### AN EPILOGUE.

As children lingering by a summer pool,  
To while away an hour beside its brink,  
Throw from the bank, far out into the cool  
Still water, shells that glisten as they sink :

As strolling mummers on a village green,  
Playing to scanty audience, slow-beguiled,  
May leave perchance, where their poor booth has been,  
Memories that linger for some simple child :

Or as a yokel, homeward-bound at night,  
Shrill-voicing some untutored rustic lay,  
May, by his very artlessness, make light,  
For some belated traveller, the way :

Thus have we played to you a little while  
Our simple interludes of lightsome jest,  
Winning at times the guerdon of a smile.  
We too have thrown our shells : so let them rest.

Now 'neath the waters of your memory  
They lie ; and some perchance who pass this way,  
In years to come, shall pause awhile, and see  
In them the glimmer of a byegone day.

### NOTICE.

The Editors beg to give notice that the "RATTLE" will in future be published not as a monthly, but as an occasional, periodical. To Subscribers whose names remain on the Publishers' list, each number will be sent as it appears, price 75 cents; Non-subscribers, \$1.



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